



In an Essay Exam, you are given a subject and a focus. The subject is obvious – what does the question ask you to write about? Determining the focus is slightly more difficult – what and how should you write about this given subject? Here are some categories of words that help you to determine the focus of your answer. Always look at the number of points a short answer or essay question is worth to determine how much information you want to provide in your answer.

Definitions of Terminology	Terminology used in Essay Questions		
Identification Terms: Ask you to present the facts as briefly as possible. These are typically short answer questions worth a small amount of points.	<i>Cite</i>	<i>Define</i>	<i>Enumerate</i>
	<i>Identify</i>	<i>Indicate</i>	<i>List</i>
	<i>Mention</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>State</i>
Description Terms: Ask you to provide detailed information about the concept. To determine how much to write, look at the point value of the question.	<i>Describe</i>	<i>Discuss</i>	<i>Review</i>
	<i>Diagram</i>	<i>Sketch</i>	<i>Develop</i>
	<i>Outline</i>	<i>Summarize</i>	<i>Illustrate</i>
Relation Terms: Ask you to compare and contrast (discuss the similarities and differences) between concepts.	<i>Analyze</i>	<i>Compare</i>	<i>Contrast</i>
	<i>Relate</i>	<i>Differentiate</i>	<i>Distinguish</i>
Demonstration Terms: Ask you to defend an issue or show how a concept works. Typically these questions are worth the most points.	<i>Demonstrate</i>	<i>Justify</i>	<i>Explain why</i>
	<i>Prove</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Show</i>
Evaluation Terms: Ask for your judgment about a specific issue and concrete reasons to support your opinion or argument.	<i>Assess</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Criticize</i>
	<i>Evaluate</i>	<i>Interpret</i>	<i>Propose</i>